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ABSTRACT

This illustrated handbook provides advice and answers prospective questions for women who are considering a return to higher education. Based upon the author's own experiences, it begins by focusing on some of the reasons for returning to school. Next, various concerns and anxieties that a woman might face in going to college--self-doubt, fears of being an outsider and being unable to compete with younger students, feelings of neglecting the family and one's responsibilities, and lack of definite goals--are considered supportively and reassuringly. Questions related to admission tests, credit for prior learning, choosing a school, costs and financial aid, admissions procedures, choosing courses, support services, and campus activities are examined. The booklet concludes with a glossary of educational terms and phrases. (DR)

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"WHATCHA GONNA BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?"

A GUIDE FOR THE OLDER WOMAN WHO WANTS TO GO TO COLLEGE

MONNIE RYAN

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FOREWORD . . .

I left college nearly 17 years ago to pursue a "glamorous" secretarial career. I had a great job, an apartment, and my own knight in shining armor. The world was at my feet.

In fairly short order, my utopia expanded to include a white picket fence, a live-in shining knight, and later the pitter-patter of four tiny feet. All too soon, the shining armor needed frequent polishing, and the only thing at my feet was a pile of dirty diapers. The picket fence stayed white only if I washed it.

If someone had told me then that, at the not-so-tender age of 35 with two children of assorted types and sizes, I would go back to college, I would have chortled and switched the topic of conversation to my daughter's wonderful new teething ring. If she had told me I would be graduating from college (with a degree in Psychology, yet!), I would have thought she had rocks in her head. And if she had told me I would be enrolling in graduate school, I would have directed her to the nearest straight-jacket.

But that's exactly what I HAVE done. After nearly three years of working full-time, both at a paying job and at home, and attending college part-time, I will soon receive my bachelors degree and begin graduate school. The diapers are long since gone; I no longer CARE what color the fence is.

The world is again at my feet.

M.R.

INTRODUCTION

Ever-increasing numbers of women are becoming aware that child-rearing and housecleaning, no matter how fulfilling, will occupy a relatively short period in their lives. The realization occurs to some when their children reach school age; to others, it occurs after the children have left the "nest" to begin lives on their own; still others have known it all along.

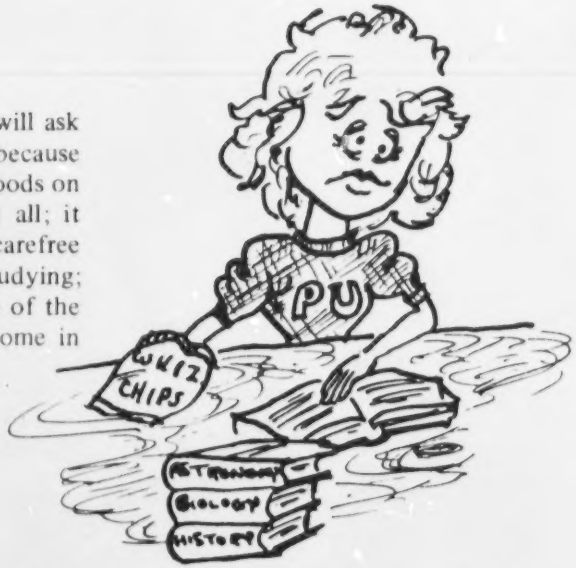
The availability and convenience of colleges and universities, branch campuses, and community and technical colleges has provided an answer for many women. Some are returning to school to finish an education they interrupted years before; others are entering college for the first time. Some desire to renew skills for old careers; some are preparing for new careers; and others simply are seeking self-fulfillment.

Who are these women and where do they come from? They come from all parts of the country—cities, suburbs, and rural communities. They are wives, ex-wives, and never-marrieds; they are non-mothers, mothers, and grandmothers. They come in assorted shapes, sizes, and ages; in short, they are YOU. And most of them have one thing in common: they're shaking in their shoes.

And that's the reason for this guidebook. The ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu, once wrote: "The journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." Hopefully, what you read in these pages will help you gain the confidence to take that first step and make the rest of your trip a bit easier.

BUT WHY GO TO COLLEGE?

There will be many times when you will ask yourself this question. It won't be because you love eating jiffy casseroles, junk foods on the run, or sometimes not eating at all; it won't be because of those formerly carefree weekends you will have to spend studying; and it CERTAINLY won't be because of the nest of butterflies that make their home in your stomach at exam time.



So just what ARE the rewards you will receive from going to college? There will be many. First of all, your education is a permanent investment in YOU. What you learn can never be taken away from you. You can take pride in your accomplishments—when you finally DO receive that diploma, it will represent YOUR work and YOUR name will be printed on it. You will develop a greater sense of self-worth—just knowing that you CAN succeed is in itself important.

Education also offers many extrinsic rewards. You can prepare yourself for a new career or a different one. Even if you have chosen homemaking as your career, you should keep in mind that women, particularly housewives, are economically vulnerable. In this day and age, there aren't many guarantees. No matter how secure you may be at present, you never know when your circumstances will change and it will become necessary for you to seek employment. Even if you never need to work outside your home, though, you will at least have the security of knowing that you could if you had to.

WON'T IT BE MORE TROUBLE THAN I'M WORTH?

Rubbish! Of COURSE it won't be easy—nothing worth working for ever is. But WORTH it? You bet your disposable diapers!

You cannot expect to be important to others if you are not also important to YOURSELF. You have a right, perhaps even an obligation, to try to live up to your full potential in every aspect of your life. To want to be all that you can be is not selfish. You wouldn't hesitate to drill the value of self-improvement into the heads of your husband and children—why should you exclude yourself? Besides, the more you have for yourself, the more you will have to pass on to others around you.

WON'T I STAND OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB?

Wrong! With the continued decline in student enrollments, most colleges and universities are making a concerted effort to attract the non-traditional student (meaning over 25) just to keep their doors open. This means your classes will include students of all ages and sexes who, like you, have found that the arms of educational institutions have opened wide and opportunities for higher education have expanded to include just about any possibility.

However, even if there aren't many "older folks" in your classes, there's much to be said in FAVOR of being a "sore thumb." You'll be noticed by your professors, and the younger students' natural curiousity will make you a center of attention.

BUT HOW CAN I POSSIBLY COMPETE WITH 18-YEAR OLDS?

It's natural to feel you can't compete with younger students. After all, they have just come out of a similarly structured educational environment and are more familiar with the rules of the game. Then too, most of them don't have to go home and fix supper and do the washing before they can crack the books.

But those are just about the ONLY things the kids have in their favor. Older women have two important advantages—desire and experience. Studies have shown that older students do much better in college than do their younger counterparts. For openers, it's a safe assumption that anyone who has to cook breakfast for five, make four beds, plant a flower garden and bathe the cat before she leaves for school really WANTS to go.

Then too, the simple fact is that you don't have as much time to "waste" as the younger students do. You want to get the most from the least amount of time, and you'll work harder to get it. All those years of PTA meetings, short-order cooking, and running a limousine service have made you an expert at juggling your time successfully. You haven't forgotten those old study habits—you've just stored them away temporarily. You'll also be pleasantly surprised at how much you already know. for a change, the mere fact that you've lived longer will count for something.

BUT I'D FEEL SO GUILTY . . .

If those around you are a bit less than enthusiastic about your educational goals, it will be easy for them to intimidate you when the going gets a bit rough. And if you are somewhat hesitant yourself because you're afraid of shortchanging your family, you may tie yourself in knots to prove to them that they won't suffer from neglect because of your "selfish" pursuits.

Remember that you are a person in your own right, not simply an extension of your family. You do not need to "earn" the right to improve yourself. Any family situation necessarily involves give and take, (even though that give and take many times takes on all the characteristics of a tug of war). The point is, YOU are entitled to put YOUR needs first occasionally, and you needn't feel guilty for doing it. After all, guilt is only guilt if you accept it. Despite what they want you to believe, your family won't develop apoplexy if their every need is not met immediately. Reexamine your priorities—the basement steps can stay dirty one more day while you study for tomorrow's exam.

HOUSEWORK VS. HOMEWORK

"If it's loose, pick it up; if it isn't, dust it; if it moves, feed it."

Peg Bracken, ***The I Hate to Housekeep Book***

Be realistic. No one ever REALLY ate off the kitchen floor. When your daughter draws pictures in the dust on the TV, view it as excellent preparation for her future artistic career. In the final analysis, isn't more important that you be remembered for your intelligence and vitality than for your spot-free china? If your husband really loves seeing himself in the dinner plates, hand him a dishrag. That's HIS value, not yours. You may be married for eternity, but nowhere is it written that you have to spend that eternity up to YOUR neck in HIS ring-around-the-collar.

Sounds beautiful, doesn't it? But we all know that, practically speaking, it probably won't work out that way. No matter how YOU approach it, your family will probably consider the housework to be "your job." However, it is very true that much of what you do is unnecessary or could easily be done by someone else. (Who knows–with a little practice, they might even become reasonably proficient!) Establish your priorities; relax your standards a bit.

Keep in mind that Modern Science IS truly amazing. If a pigeon in a testing lab can learn to push a button, your daughter can learn to throw the washing in the machine. The secret is to execute a D–D–D (Decide, Delegate, and Disappear). Then stick to your guns. The first time your daughter has to pay a library fine out of her allowance for overdue books she forgot will be the last. And who cares what the lady next door thinks–she's probably green with envy because you're going to college and she's not.

BUT THEY NEED ME . . .

Of course they do. But it's a fact that the quality of the time you spend with your children is more important than the amount, and that quality of care is likely to improve as the time you have to spend decreases.

It is also true that your children probably don't REALLY need you as much as they'd like you to think. Sure, they want Mom around–after all, wouldn't YOU like to have a live-in maid-cook-chauffeur at your beck and call?

But they're NOT helpless: and the words "mother" and "servant" are NOT synonyms. In the long run, your children will benefit from being allowed, even encouraged, to become self-reliant and independent. It's their home too, so share the wealth. If your kids don't know how to hang up their own clothes, it's about time they learned. Save your homemade cookies for weekends or special occasions. The bakery people get paid for making goodies—use them. Chances are your kids couldn't tell the difference blindfolded anyway.

One thing you CAN do is sit down with the kids and explain what you're doing and why. If they understand just what you're trying to accomplish and how important it is to you, they'll be more willing to help out. And, when you DO finish, they'll be able to take more than a little pride in knowing that they helped make your dream a reality.

The fact that you're in school will also serve as a good example for your kids. You're giving them first-hand insight into the value of education and the importance of working for something you want.

"Failure is Impossible"

Susan B. Anthony

Good old Susan B. obviously never stood nose-to-nose with a husband who can't find two socks that match. It's an established fact that even though husbands seem to be able to take unending abuse on their jobs, at home they must be Handled With Care. Even though your husband may acknowledge the fact that the home and kids are half his, he will probably be quite selective about which half he claims. There is validity, however, in "turn about's fair play." Chances are you helped him over quite a few rough spots on HIS way up. Actually enlisting his wholehearted cooperation and support, however, may seem as likely as reducing the National Debt.

Some husbands may be extremely supportive, both verbally and by willingly taking over added responsibilities at home. They offer encouragement and advice and perform extra chores uncomplainingly. Unfortunately, they're about as common as plastic forks in a French restaurant.

Many other husbands are quite willing to "let" their wives do anything–just as long as their accustomed needs are met first. A seemingly liberal husband, for example, may suddenly exhibit latent stubbornness when he has to pour his own orange juice.

If your husband is supportive of your efforts, you will experience relatively little family difficulties during your college career. (It would also be a good idea to start a campaign to nominate him for sainthood.) But if you're stuck with the common, everyday variety, you may need some suggestions for dealing with the inevitable problems.

There are many underlying reasons for your husband's objections to your college career. First of all, he is probably firmly entrenched in tradition. He is used to seeing women, especially his wife, in their "accustomed" roles. (And the fact that those "roles" usually work to his benefit merely adds to his reluctance to have you give even one of them up.) Your husband may also be afraid that you'll "outgrow" him, or find someone more attractive at school. He may be afraid that you'll find the "real" world so appealing that you'll want to stay in it permanently—without him. (Never mind what YOU went through when HE went out!) He may also realize that some of his own interests will have to be curtailed because of the time you spend in school.

The fact is, your husband's fears are very real to him and should be respected as such. Find out what his concerns are; discuss them. Enlist his help with your homework; talk to him about your professors and other students. Try to make him feel he has a part in what your're trying to accomplish.

The only kind of change husbands will accept readily is the kind they get back from a dollar bill. Therefore, your husband will probably need to be acclimated gradually to upsets in his established routine. You may want to ease your way (and therefore his) into school by taking only one or two classes at first. Let him adjust to making supper one night a week before you announce that from then on you won't be home to do the dishes and put the kids to bed.

If all else fails, try convincing him to come to school with you. Your college or university undoubtedly has plenty to offer him. After all, a little learning won't hurt him, either!

BUT I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO

At this point in your life, you may not be sure of much of anything; but you're leaning toward pursuing some type of college education. Just because you have nothing specific in mind or already know you don't want to spend the rest of your life up to your tu-tu in term papers doesn't mean you need to give up plans to go to college. Many options are available which serve as viable alternatives to the 4-year college degree.

It might be a good idea to take an interest inventory. Your answers to these test questions will indicate where your occupational interests lie. The admissions officer or your adviser can give you more specific information and make arrangements for you to take such a test prior to your enrollment in classes.

If the 4-year degree seems absolutely overwhelming, you might consider getting an associate degree. These degrees require two years of full-time study. (Attending part-time would, obviously, require a longer period of time.) The degrees are usually in specialized fields and have somewhat rigidly structured courses of study. You may not have the opportunity to take "electives"—classes mostly for fun. However, getting the degree DOES involve less total time. Many subject areas are available, including computer programming, electrical and mechanical engineering, accounting, secretarial science, to name just a few.

If you don't really want to work toward any specific degree, consider the many continuing education programs offered by most colleges and universities. These classes are open to the public and may cost you considerably less. You earn no college credit, though some classes earn C.E.U.s (Continuing Education Units). Also, some classes may be taken for either credit OR continuing education. It's the same class, except that the continuing education student gets no college credit. For some classes, you can have the C.E.U.s earned transferred to college credit. There are limitations, but don't fail to check it out.

You may also want to take classes just because, like Mt. Everest, they are there. If so, why not consider a liberal arts degree, which allows you to take subjects of general interest. Some colleges and universities even offer associate, or two-year, degrees in liberal arts. The advantage here is that if you're going to spend time taking classes you want to take, you might as well arrange to have them count toward something if possible.

WILL I HAVE TO TAKE TESTS?

That's one place where the old folks luck out. For admission in state-supported colleges and universities, tests are generally not required if you're over 21 years of age and/or have been out of high school for more than 3 years. However, don't discount the benefits of existing pre-admission testing programs. These tests usually don't cost you anything but a little time, and the results can help expose any potential problem areas which could haunt you later on.

CAN I GET CREDIT FOR WHAT I ALREADY KNOW?

You sure can! One way of doing it is called credit-by-exam. If you feel you would be wasting your valuable time taking a class when you already know the material, you can take a proficiency examination given and graded by an approved instructor. The Registrar, your adviser, or the professor of the class in question can give you details.

Another way of getting credit is called Credit for Life Experiences (CLEEP) For example, you may be able to receive a number of college credits if you've successfully completed the Certified Professional Secretary examination. You may get credit for work you have done in a special area, such as holding public office or certain types of volunteer work. If you think you qualify, check with your adviser. It won't cost you anything to ask, and any credit you can get through the back door means that much less time you will have to spend going in the front.

WHICH SCHOOL DO I CHOOSE?

Many types of institutions of higher learning exist to meet the needs of almost every student. Colleges and universities are major institutions which offer four-year degrees as well as post-graduate degrees. Branch campuses are affiliates of the major institutions and are smaller and located in communities other than that of the "parent" university. They may offer associate, or two-year, degrees in a variety of areas. Many times, however, the courses offered may be primarily designed for the freshman-sophomore years, and to earn a 4-year degree you would have to transfer to the parent university for your junior-senior years.

Community colleges provide instructional programs in arts and sciences, technical fields, and adult education as needed by the community. They are operated by municipalities and normally include courses for the first and second year beyond high school only.

Technical colleges offer vocational training to prepare you for a specific career, such as electronics engineer or secretary. Since the courses you take are almost all career-related, the total time you spend may be less than you would spend at a university or community college. It may also be cheaper.

Also worth considering are "universities without walls" and weekend colleges. The former refers to college credit that may be earned through an accredited college or university by correspondence. Lessons are mailed to you, and when you finish them you mail them back to the school. You can make arrangements for taking tests under supervision at one of your friendly neighborhood elementary or high schools. This type of education is ideal for the woman with young children. The catch is that it is generally not possible to earn a degree by correspondence only. At some point, you will be required to attend the college or university. This method does, however, provide a means of stalling for time while you get the rest of your act together.

The concept of weekend colleges is rapidly gaining in popularity. This arrangement allows you to earn a college degree on weekends only, when you don't have to go to work and can leave junior with the old man. Obviously, the work is intense because of the condensed time schedule, but you can do the homework at your convenience during the week. This method provides a viable alternative to the traditional college education, particularly for the older student.

The first step in deciding which school is best for you, obviously, is to find out what's available. Check the phone book, or get a list from your Chamber of Commerce. Friends and relatives are good sources of information. In a pinch, call a nearby university and ask the switchboard operator to give you names of nearby campuses.

After you've made a list of these campuses, write or call each and ask them to send you general campus information and procedures for admission. If you already know what course of study you intend to follow, ask for that information specifically.

The next step is to determine which value is most important to you. Is it the cost? Is the type of courses offered most critical? Does the distance from your home make a difference, or the availability of child care? Examine the information you have carefully, and weed out those campuses which do not meet your needs.

If you still can't make up your mind, you may want to visit each campus personally. Call and make an appointment to visit with an admissions officer WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION. Forget finesse and admit that you're school-shopping. Speak up—ask questions! Are the classes large enough so that you won't be called on every day and small enough that you won't need binoculars to see the blackboard? Is there opportunity for out-of-class interaction between professors and students? Are there people available to help students with problems? Do most of the classes scheduled actually materialize, or are many of them canceled? Make the admissions officer sell her school to YOU.

After you are finished with the interview, walk around and check things out. Is there a library, and is there ample room there for quiet, undisturbed study? More important, is anybody actually USING it? Is there a cafeteria, or at the very least a place to grab a quick cup of coffee between classes? Do the students seem animated and friendly? (Say "Hello" to one. If she snarls, "What do you mean by that," you should probably be suspicious.)

By this time, you should be able to make a fairly educated, objective decision as to which school has the most to offer you. You're now ready to initiate the admission process and enroll as a bona fide college student!

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST . . . AND WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD IT?

Like everything else in this world, education won't come cheap. Most schools charge on a per-credit-hour basis for up to a certain number of hours, after which a flat fee is charged. The costs per hour will vary from $20 or less at a state-supported institution to several hundred dollars at a private school. Read the college brochures carefully; you'll find the exact figures there.

There are lots of ways for you to get money to help pay for a college education—many of which are even legal. One method is scholarships. These are amounts of money awarded by various agencies, organizations, employers, or the college or university itself. They are generally awarded to students on the basis of financial need and/or scholastic ability, though not necessarily in that order.

Grants are amounts of money awarded by Federal or state agencies to students who demonstrate financial need. Various percentages of the cost of your schooling can be granted, and you won't have to pay the money back.

If you are an armed services veteran, you will be eligible for benefits under the G. I. Bill. You may also qualify for benefits if you are a G. I. widow or if your veteran husband is totally disabled.

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation provides money to persons who can prove physical or emotional disability. Welfare is a source of money for low-income students. The amount allotted is dependent on how much income you have from other sources. There are also certain benefits available under the Social Security Act. For further information on these and other possible sources of money see the financial aids officer at your college or university.

Many employers will agree to pay half or more of the cost of your education, particularly if it's work-related. If you are currently employed, check it out. Student loans may also be available through your campus, local bank, or the U. S. Government. When the day of reckoning comes, you'll have to pay it back; but interest rates, if any, are generally low.

Being a senior citizen gives you a further break. If you are 55 years old or older and retired or 60 years old or older regardless of your employment status, you may be eligible to attend classes free of charge. All you need do is see the admissions officer at the college or university of your choice, throw caution to the wind, and admit your age. The only hitch is that when push comes to shove, the paying customers get first shot at the classes.

Another way to get money for college is to earn it yourself. Most colleges and universities offer part-time jobs to students, and they don't practice age discrimination. The jobs may pay minimum wages or less, but every little bit helps. Check with the financial aids office and keep your eye on campus bulletin boards for possible job opportunities.

OK, I'M READY. WHERE DO I START?

First, go to the Admissions Office of the college or university of your choice and tell them you want to be admitted. They'll tell you what to do next, which will undoubtedly include filling out a multitude of forms in quadruplicate, arranging to have your high school transcripts sent, and paying an admission fee. Be sure to take two things with you when you go, however—your sense of humor and your Social Security number. Without the former, you'll go crazy; and without the latter, you won't even exist.

If you are given brochures or literature from the campus, read it thoroughly and carefully. The responsibility for the successful completion of your education is ultimately YOURS. You should familiarize yourself with the services available to you, who does what at the campus, and with your rights and responsibilities as a student.

If you are not assigned an adviser automatically, ask to see one. She can give you help and advice on choosing classes, financial aid, and answer any questions you may have. Inquire about freshman orientation, which is a day or days set aside for new students to visit the campus and acquaint themselves with the facilities, services, and personnel at the campus. It's not only a good way to get to know the place, but it'll get you an extra day out of the house.

Remember, the best resource you have is YOU. Don't hesitate to ask questions. The fact that you don't have an answer is a perfectly legitimate reason for asking. Don't get discouraged—if you're persistent, sooner or later you'll find the somebody who knows (and the more persistent you are, the sooner it will be!)

HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT TO TAKE?

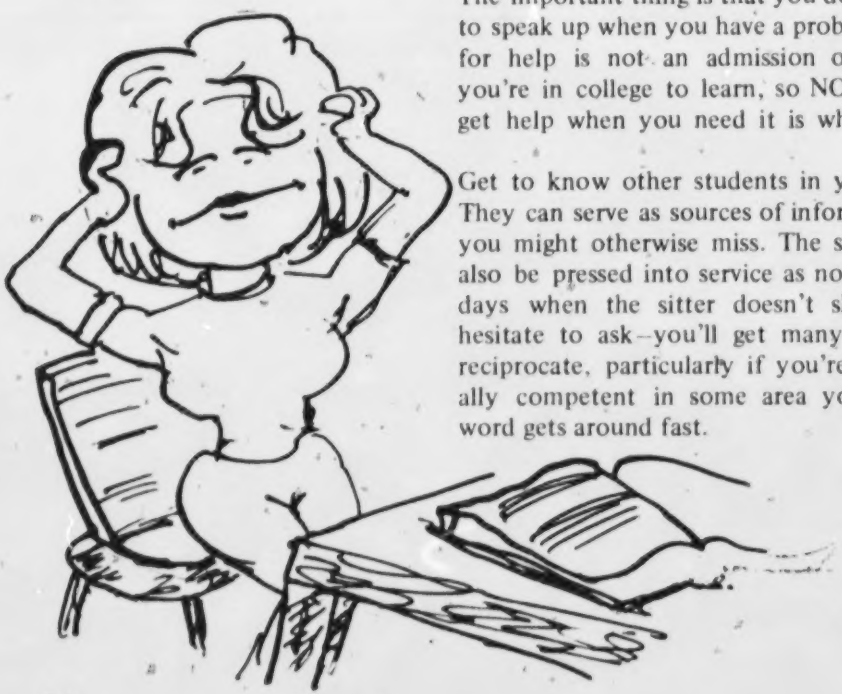
Your actual choice of classes will be dependent in part in whether you are taking just one or two classes or a full load and whether or not you are enrolled in a specific program. It's important, however, that the first time around you talk to an adviser before you sign up for anything. Some classes have prerequisites (classes that must be taken prior to the one you want). Generally, there is a good reason to honor these prerequisites; otherwise, you might find yourself trying to learn to ride-sidesaddle before you have learned what a horse is. Also, some classes are carried only sequentially, and you might have to wait a whole year to get class if you don't adhere strictly to the prescribed order.

How can you know which professor is best? The answer is you CAN'T. Your best bet is to ask around. Young people in particular are usually painfully honest; they'll paint a vivid verbal picture of the person you're inquiring about. Always remember, however, to temper their advice with the knowledge that "one woman's meat is another woman's poison."

Don't be fooled into thinking that "Staff" must be a popular professor since she teaches so many classes. That's simply one of the designations made by universities when the instructor is unknown at the time the class schedules are printed. She may turn out to be anyone from a graduate student earning her fellowship money to a 75-year old semi-retired professor. While you do want to avoid unnecessary uncertainties at this stage, don't pass up a needed or wanted class for this reason alone. Many times these instructors turn out to be much more interesting than the staid old professor who's been teaching the same course in the same place for the past forty years and whose class provides an excellent place in which to take a nap.

WHAT IF I HAVE TROUBLE?

If you're having trouble learning something, see your professor first. Theoretically, at least, she's more knowledgeable than you in the subject (after all, she's teaching it). She's also in the best position to evaluate the work you've done so far and to make recommendations for future action. She'll either help you herself or suggest that you get help from whatever tutorial service is available at the campus.

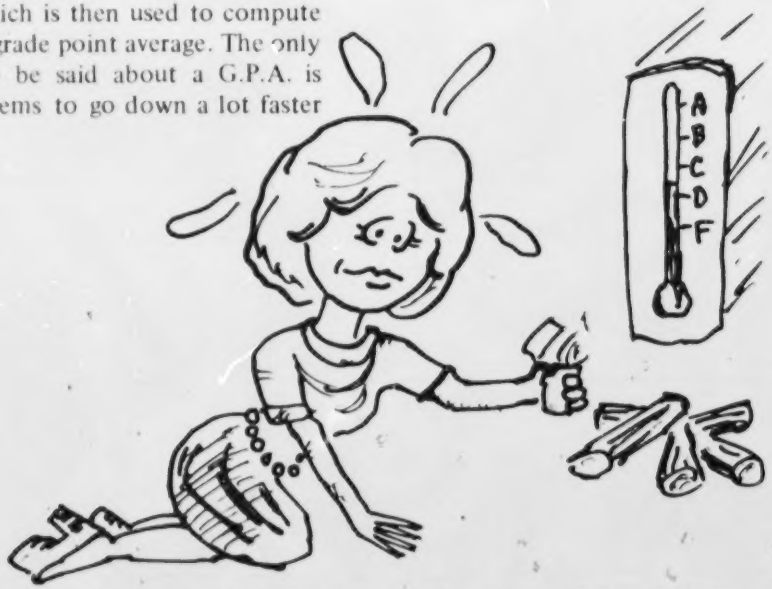


The important thing is that you don't hesitate to speak up when you have a problem. Asking for help is not an admission of stupidity; you're in college to learn, so NOT asking to get help when you need it is what's stupid.

Get to know other students in your classes. They can serve as sources of information that you might otherwise miss. The students can also be pressed into service as note-takers on days when the sitter doesn't show. Don't hesitate to ask—you'll get many chances to reciprocate, particularly if you're exceptionally competent in some area yourself. The word gets around fast.

"Grades are a lot like the weather; everyone TALKS about them, but no one DOES anything about them."

Grades are evaluative measures awarded upon the completion of a class. Standard letter grades are A, B, C, D, and F. Each is assigned a point value which is then used to compute your G.P.A., or grade point average. The only positive thing to be said about a G.P.A. is that it always seems to go down a lot faster than it goes up.



One way to beat the system is to register for a class under the pass/fail option. Since your record will only show whether you passed or failed, you at least have a 50-50 shot at making it. There are usually limits to the total classes you are allowed to take under this option, though, so be a bit prudent.

If you can find the extra time (no humor intended), you will benefit from participation in campus extracurricular activities. It's a good way to meet people, get worthwhile experience, and just plain have fun. Like to run things? Get involved in student government. Enjoy singing? Join the chorus. Frustrated jock? Try your hand or foot at intramural athletics. Participation in these activities can help you feel more a part of campus life and in general add to the quality of your total education.

AND, IN CONCLUSION . . .

The fact that you're still reading this handbook is a pretty good indication that you're either a glutton for punishment or you are serious about furthering your education. If you've hung in there this far, you should now have a general idea of what to expect in an institution of higher learning and ways to handle some of the problems you will encounter both at home and at school.

From here on, it's up to you. You've come a long way; but baby, you've still got a lot of territory to cover before dark. But if you use the resources you have within you, you'll make it with half the afternoon to spare. Good luck, and welcome to the world of academe.

GLOSSARY OF COLLEGE TERMS

Venturing through the terminology germane to college and university life tends to take on all the appeal of picking your way through a mine field. So, keeping in mind that forewarned is forearmed, the following glossary of college terms is presented.

A.C.T. American College Test, a college entrance examination generally required of high school students. Not required for potential college students who are 21 years of age or older or who have been out of high school for three years or more.

ACADEMIC Term pertaining to or characteristic of a school. Relates to formal education studies other than technical or vocational studies.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM "Right" of college and university faculty to decide what, within reason, will be done in their classrooms, such as course content, teaching methods, etc.

ACCREDITATION Official approval of a college or university by one or more Federal or state agencies or boards (e.g., The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools).

ADMINISTRATOR Person who serves in an administrative or governing capacity. Responsible for overseeing general daily maintenance of the campus. The head administrator of a campus may be called a Dean, Director, Provost, etc.

ADMISSION Acceptance of a student by a college or university. Student is then entitled to take classes and participate in campus activities.

ADVISER Person who is responsible for giving advice to students (e.g., financial aid, class scheduling, career choice, etc.) May also be a faculty member "assigned" to an individual on a somewhat permanent basis throughout her college career as a resource person.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE Two-year degree from an accredited college or university. Prepares student for immediate job entry in a specialized technical field.

AUDIT "Sitting in" on a class normally offered for credit. Student generally pays the regular fees for the class and is expected to do the work, but no college credit is received for the class.

BACHELORS DEGREE Four-year degree from an accredited college or university. Awarded upon successful conclusion of a prescribed major course of study.

BRANCH CAMPUS Relatively small campus affiliated with a major "parent" college or university and located in a community other than the one in which the parent university is located.

CAMPUS The entire physical content of a college or university. Includes all buildings and grounds.

CATALOG The college or university publication which lists general campus information, classes, and requirements for completion of courses of study in each specific area.

CLEEP Credit for Life Experiences. Method by which college credit can be earned for knowledge already possessed by the student.

COLLEGE A school of higher learning which grants bachelors degrees in liberal arts or science or both. May also refer to any of the undergraduate divisions of a university (see UNIVERSITY).

COMMUNITY COLLEGE Municipally operated two-year college offering courses in arts and sciences, technical fields, and/or adult education.

COMPREHENSIVE All-inclusive. For example, an examination which includes all material learned in a class up to the time of the exam (see EXAMINATION).

CONTINUING EDUCATION Program of "adult education" offered at many colleges and universities. Classes are open to the public and generally cost less than credit classes.

COUNSELOR Person who helps student with personal problems not specifically related to coursework.

CREDIT-BY-EXAM Method of obtaining college credit for a specific class by taking a proficiency examination.

CREDIT-HOUR Numerical value assigned to each college or university class, depending on the amount of material covered. A class earning 3 credit-hours for a quarter will normally meet approximately 3 hours per week for the duration of the quarter.

CROSS-REGISTERED Classes listed under both credit and Continuing Education. Student registers under either designation she prefers.

CURRICULUM Collective term for various courses of study offered by a college or university.

DROP AND ADD Time set aside after classes have begun during which students may add or delete a class or classes from their schedule without penalty. There is generally a slight fee for this service.

ELECTIVE Class not specifically required in the student's course of study. May be chosen by the student on the basis of interest.

ESSAY TEST Examination in which answers to questions are written in paragraph form.

EXAMINATION Method of determining the amount of material learned by a student in a class. Also called a "test."

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES Campus activities and events other than classes in which students may participate, such as choir, student government, or athletics.

FEE Amount of money charged for a class or service.

FINAL EXAM Last test given in a class. May include all or part of the coursework covered during the class.

FINANCIAL AID Money received from various sources to help students with college costs.

FULL-TIME STUDENT Student taking the minimum number of credit-hours (or more) set by the college or university to distinguish her from the part-time student (see PART-TIME STUDENT).

GRADE Value rating assigned to the quality of work done in a class. Usually expressed in letter form (e.g., A, B, C, D, and F).

GRADE POINT AVERAGE Cumulative numerical value of grades earned by student. Determined by dividing total points by the total number of credit-hours.

INCOMPLETE Letter "I" awarded by professor at the conclusion of a class which indicates that the student failed to complete the required work. Grade may be changed to standard letter grade upon completion of the work, usually within a specified time limit.

INTRAMURAL Refers to "within-walls" events. Generally used in connection with athletic teams which consist of students from a college or university who compete with each other as opposed to competing with teams from other colleges or universities.

LIBERAL ARTS Academic disciplines such as language, history, philosophy, etc., that are presumed to develop general intellectual ability and provide information of general cultural concern.

MAJOR Concentrated coursework in one subject or area leading to a degree with specialization in that particular area.

MASTERS DEGREE Post-graduate degree awarded upon successful completion of a prescribed course of study. May include writing of a thesis (see THESIS).

MID-TERM Test given approximately at the middle of a quarter or semester.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT As a general rule, a college student who is 25 years old or older.

OBJECTIVE TEST Examination which includes multiple-choice, true-false, and/or short-answer questions.

ORIENTATION Get-acquainted period for new students. Time in which students visit the college or university to acquaint themselves with rules and procedures, facilities, personnel, etc.

PART-TIME STUDENT A student not taking enough credit-hours in any given quarter or semester to qualify as a full-time student (see FULL-TIME STUDENT).

PASS-FAIL OPTION Student prerogative of not receiving a standard letter grade upon completion of coursework in a particular class. Student's record shows only whether the course was passed or failed.

Ph. D. Highest academic degree, awarded after completion of a bachelors degree and a masters degree. Person holding this degree may properly be referred to as "Dr." (see BACHELORS DEGREE and MASTERS DEGREE).

PREREGISTRATION Period of time in which students may register for classes for the upcoming quarter or semester in advance of the set Registration Day.

PREREQUISITE Course required to have been successfully completed prior to the enrollment in another class.

PROFESSOR General term for a person who teaches a college or university class.

QUALITY POINTS Numerical point value assigned to letter grades received (e.g., A = 4; B = 3; C = 2; D = 1; and F = 0.)

QUARTER Time schedule in which new classes are begun three times during the academic year from September to June, with each session approximately ten weeks' duration.

QUARTER-HOUR Term for credit-hour when the college or university operates on the quarter system (see QUARTER).

REGISTRAR Administrator responsible for keeping student records, transcripts, and handling class registration procedures.

REGISTRATION The process of enrolling in one or more classes for a given quarter or semester.

ROOM & BOARD Set amount charged for on-campus housing and food.

SCHEDULE BOOK Booklet listing proposed classes for each quarter or semester, showing days, times, rooms, and names of professors.

SCHOLARSHIP Money awarded to a student to help defray the cost of higher education, usually based on student grades and/or financial need.

SEMESTER Time schedule in which new classes are begun two times during the academic year of September to June, with each session being approximately 15 weeks in duration.

SEMESTER-HOUR Term for credit-hour when the college or university operates on the semester system. (see SEMESTER).

SENIOR CITIZEN For college registration purposes, any person 55 years old or older who is retired or any person 60 years old or older regradless of employment status.

SEQUENTIAL CLASSES Courses offered consecutively with each course serving as the prerequisite for one of the following (see PREREQUISITE).

STUDENT RIGHTS "Freedom" of students to assure themselves of as "fair deal." Includes procedures for appealing grades, input on college or university policymaking, and other student grievances.

SYLLABUS Course outline or proposed material to be covered in the duration of a specific class.

TECHNICAL COLLEGE Institution offering vocational training in specific areas.

TEXTBOOK The book or books used for reference and/or study in a particular class.

THESIS "Research" paper on a specialized subject. May be required for the completion of a masters degree (see MASTERS DEGREE).

TRANSCRIPT The official record of all grades from a particular college or university. Cumulative record of coursework which is updated at the end of each quarter or semester. Kept by Registrar (see REGISTRAR).

TRANSFER Process by which a student enters a college or university after having been enrolled at another college or university.

TUITION Amount of money charged for classes, usually a set amount per quarter—or semester-hour.

TUTOR Person competent in a specific subject who acts as a teacher for a student who is having problems with the subject.

TWO-PLUS-TWO Two-year associate degree in which coursework taken is also applicable to a four-year degree.

UNDERGRADUATE Student who has not completed the requirements for a four-year degree from a college or university.

UNIVERSITY Institution of higher learning with teaching and research facilities including a graduate school and professional schools and which awards bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees.

UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WALLS University offering coursework by correspondence.

WEEKEND COLLEGE System by which students may earn a college degree by attending classes on weekends only.

WITHDRAWAL Letter "W" recorded when a student voluntarily drops out of a specific class within a prescribed time limit. A small fee is generally charged for the service (see DROP AND ADD).

AFTERWORD

Though I would like to visualize myself charging determinedly down the road astride a mighty steed and knocking down windmills along the way, the simple fact is that if it weren't for the help of some very special people, some of the windmills would have been virtually indestructible, and a couple of times I would have probably even fallen off my horse!

The professors at Kent State University Trumbull Campus are, in my opinion, among the best anywhere; I am doubly fortunate to count many of them as friends. Their help and encouragement along the way has been invaluable. I also owe a debt of gratitude to certain members of the Trumbull Campus administrative staff, who patiently withstood my all-too-frequent outpourings of anxiety and frustation.

Most importantly, I must give a pat on the collective back of my family. Even when the going was rough, which it was most of the time, they managed to keep things in some semblance of order and running smoothly.

I owe a special thanks to my daughter, Christine, whose question provided the inspiration for the title of this book; and to my son, Scott, who contributed his artistic talent by creating the illustrations.

As for my husband, Jack . . . well, just between us, I'll be happy to polish his armor anytime!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR ...

After graduating from high school in southern Ohio in 1959, the author attended Kent State University for two years, majoring in office administration. Much later, she returned to college at Kent State University Trumbull Campus, where she was awarded an Associate of Business in Office Administration in 1976. She will receive a Bachelor of Arts in Pyschology from Kent State University in August, 1978, and begin work on a Master of Education in Student Personnel Services in the fall. She has worked as a legal secretary and is currently serving as secretary to the Associate Director at the Trumbull Campus. Her husband, Jack, is Chairman of the English Department and a teacher at McKinley High School, Niles, Ohio. Their home in Niles is shared with their children, Scott, age 14, and Christine, age 9.

AND THE ILLUSTRATOR ...

Scott Ryan is a ninth-grade honor student at Edison Junior High in Niles, Ohio. He plays lead guitar and flute in a local band, is editor of the school newspaper, and is a member of the school track team. Currently, he is planning a career in journalism.

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